



ANNUAL REPORT 2024

**Ottawa County Court of Common Pleas
Judge Bruce Winters**

ABOUT THE COMMON PLEAS COURT

Court Overview

The Court of Common Pleas, General Division, handles felony criminal matters, domestic relations matters, and general civil matters. The General Division Judge also calls and supervises the Grand Jury, supervises the Adult Probation Department, appoints and supervises the Jury Commissioners, and appoints members to the Veterans Service Commission and Sand Beach Conservatory District. The Court of Common Pleas operates under Title 3 of the Ohio Revised Code.

1 Judge

3 Magistrates

13 Court Staff



The Honorable Bruce Winters, Presiding Judge

Judge Bruce Winters was elected Judge of the Ottawa County Common Pleas Court in November of 2008 and began his term February 9, 2009. Judge Winters is a life-long Ottawa County resident and graduate of the University of Toledo College of Law. He has served many roles in the justice system, including a police officer, probation officer, assistant prosecutor, practicing attorney, and Magistrate of the Court.

During his tenure with the Common Pleas Court, Judge Winters has prioritized community safety and health, and has been responsible for several innovations in the Court to improve the community. These innovations include the development of a pre-trial supervision/bond release program, the creation of an Intensive Supervision Probation Program, and the introduction of Specialized Dockets Programs. He is also responsible for the development of an in-house foreclosure mediation program. Judge Winters has also worked to improve the safety, accessibility, and effectiveness of the courthouse by reforming and expanding court security, instituting video arraignments, and launching new software for court records and public information requests.

In addition to his role as Judge of the Common Pleas Court, Judge Winters also has served as a faculty instructor for the Ohio Judicial College in Columbus, Ohio and for the National Judicial College in Reno, Nevada. He also enjoys spending time with his wife and two children.

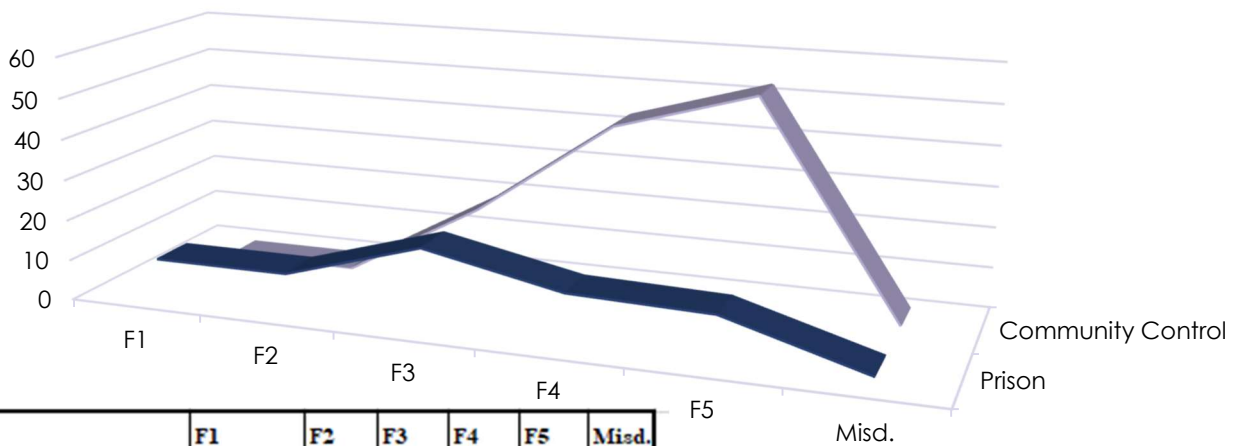
GENERAL DIVISION: CRIMINAL

2024 Overview

- 333 new criminal cases arraigned
- 370 criminal cases resolved
- 7 Jury Trials
- 154 individuals placed on community control
- 61 individuals sentenced to prison

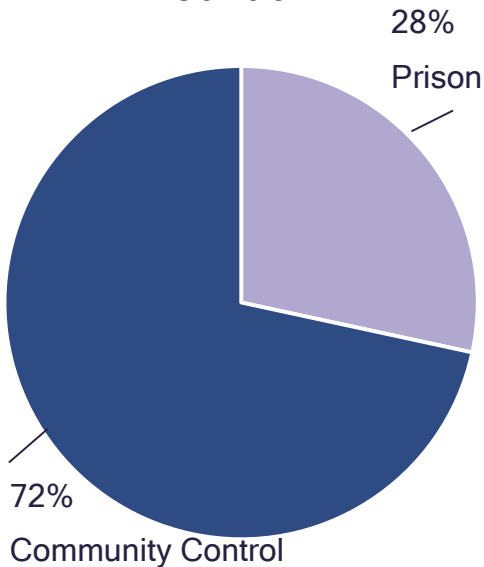


Sentencing by Highest Felony Level

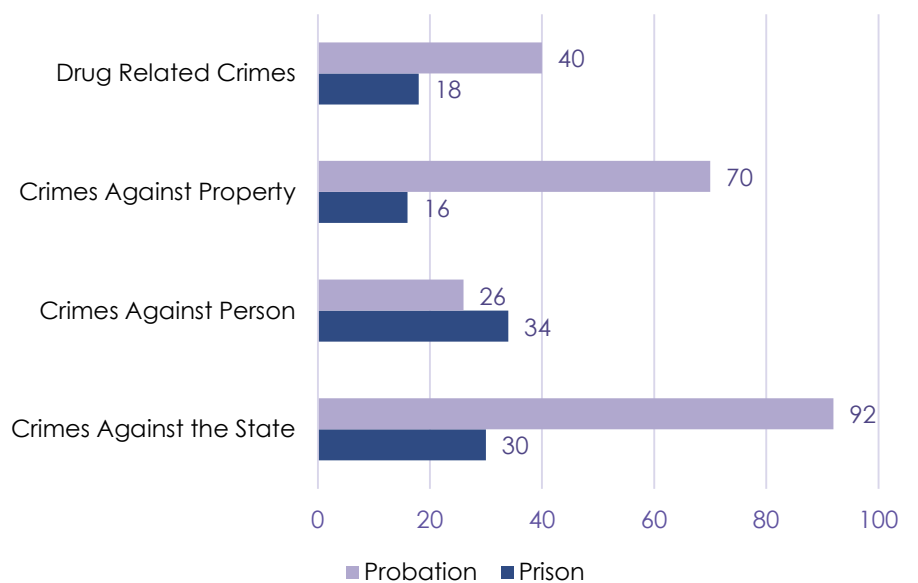


	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	Misd.
<i>Prison</i>	9	9	19	12	11	1
<i>Community Control</i>	0	0	19	43	53	1

Sentencing Breakdown



Sentencing by Type of Crime

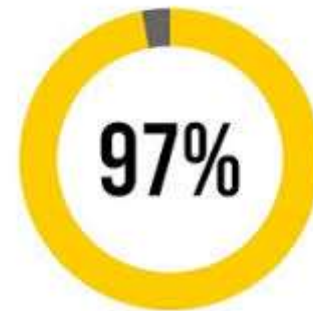


GENERAL DIVISION: DOMESTIC RELATIONS

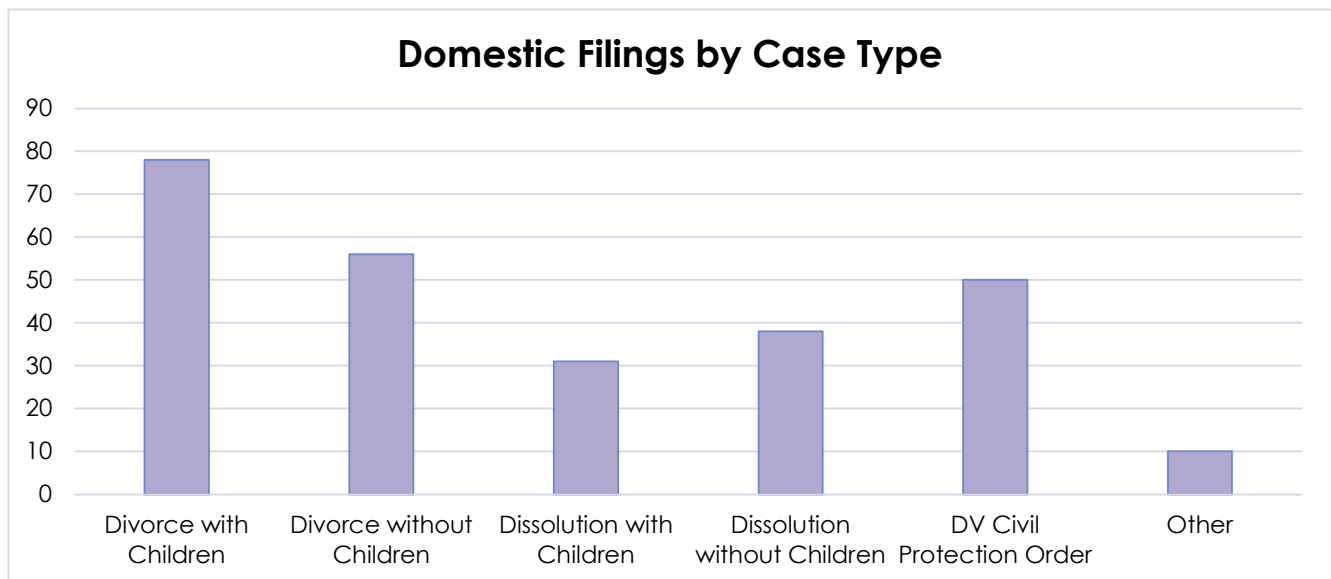
The Domestic Relations Division handles matters such as divorce, dissolution, modification of parental rights, visitation, child support enforcement, child support modifications, spousal support enforcement, spousal support modifications, and protection orders.

2024 Overview

- 141 new domestic relations cases filed
- 51 cases reopened
- 187 cases resolved
- 95 civil protection orders filed, a 14% increase from the previous year



Clearance Rate



GENERAL DIVISION: CIVIL

The Civil Division handles general civil matters of all kinds including those arising out of auto accidents, product liability claims, real estate transactions, professional malpractice, contract disputes, and administrative appeals in the areas of workers compensation, unemployment compensation, and appeals from certain local government agencies.

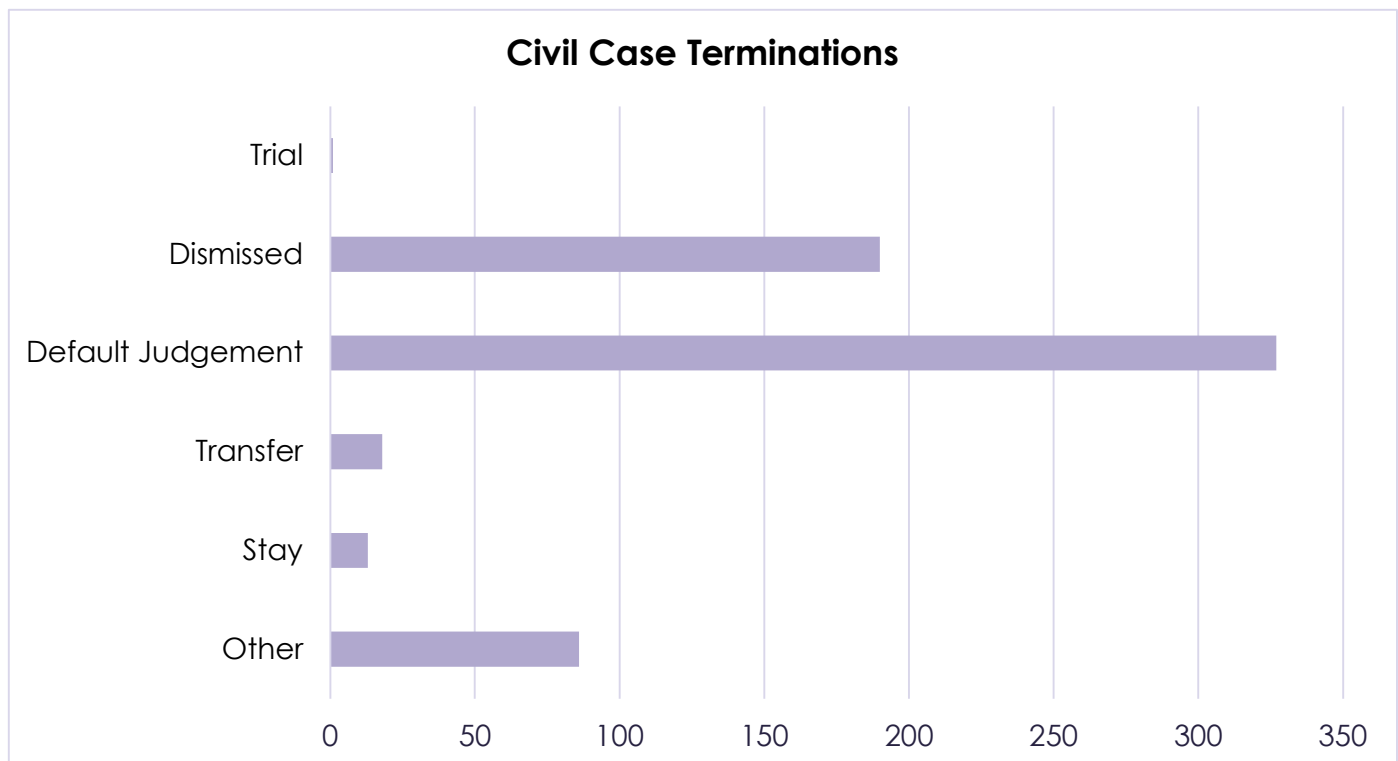
2024 Overview

- 703 new civil cases filed and reopened
- 635 cases resolved
- 1 Jury Trial



Clearance Rate

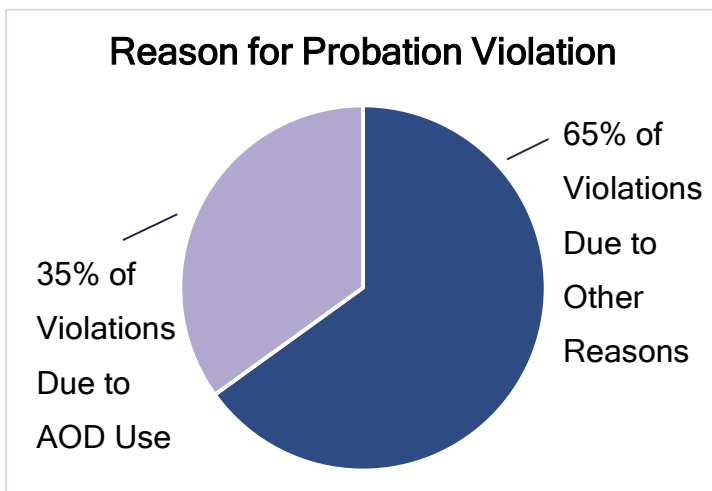
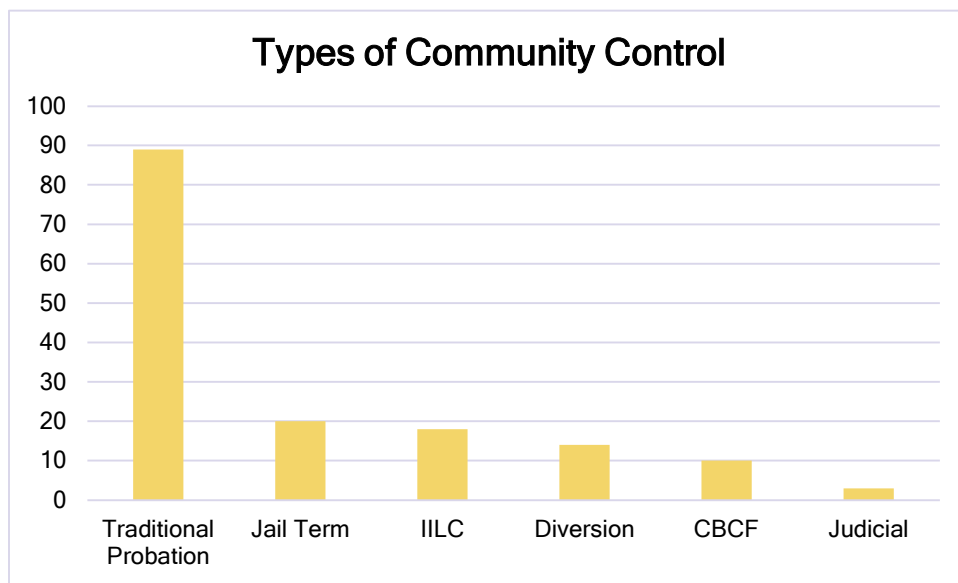
Civil Filings by Case Type	
Tort	31
Product Liability	4
Workers' Comp	9
Foreclosure	50
Admin Appeal	2
Complex Litigation	0
Other	697



COMMUNITY CONTROL

The role of the Probation Department is to supervise Offenders placed on Community Control/Probation, Intervention In Lieu of Conviction, Judicial Release, and the Specialized Dockets Programs. The Department is responsible for upholding community standards of safety and protecting the public, along with rehabilitating Offenders. Probationers are referred to services with local agencies to assist with substance abuse treatment, mental health issues, physical health care, group recovery support and other support systems, housing needs, vocational services, educational needs, parenting and family concerns, financial resources, crisis resolution, and recreational involvement.

The Court sentences individuals to Diversion, Intervention in Lieu of Conviction (IILC), traditional Community Control, a jail term, or a Community Based Correctional Facility (CBCF), and also grants judicial releases from prison.



4,771
Drug Tests Performed

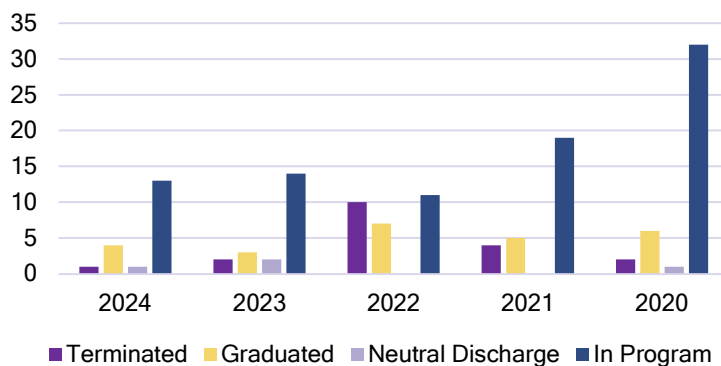
COURT PROGRAMS

Specialized Dockets

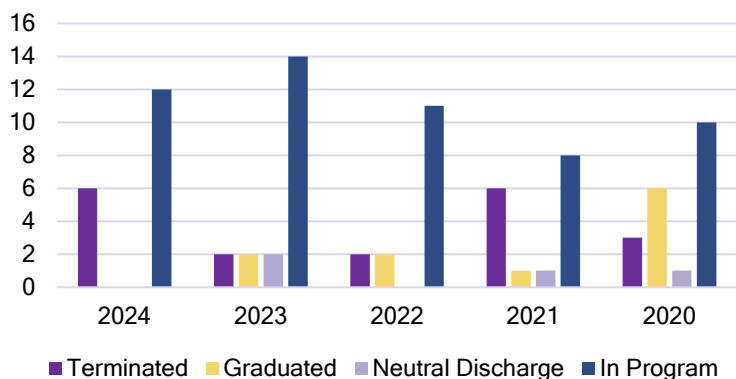
All Specialized Docket Programs maintain certification through the Ohio Supreme Court. Certification with the Supreme Court of Ohio ensures that national standards are upheld and that uniform practices are in place. The Court has funding for all 3 programs to offset costs.

The DATA Program, or Drug Addiction Treatment Alliance, has been in operation since November of 2013, and has continued to perform its mission to target high risk individuals who have committed crimes related to their drug and/or alcohol addiction. In 2024, the DATA Program served 13 individuals and there were 4 program graduations.

Data Program Participation



MHC Program Participation



The Mental Health Court was developed in 2016, and is designed to target nonviolent felony offenders with a mental health diagnosis. The program provides support and guidance, and ensures that participants receive individualized treatment to foster and improve relationships, gain coping skills, and live more productive and healthy lifestyles. The program worked with 12 individuals in 2024.

The Veteran's Court was created in 2019, and accepted the first participant in 2021. The mission is to honor the service of Veterans and promote recovery through a Court-supervised treatment program. The program coordinates and individualizes services to felony offenders whose mental health and/or substance abuse issues are related to their time in the service. The Veteran's Court Program will increase long term stability and reduce recidivism by holding offenders accountable, which will ultimately reduce crimes and improve community safety. In 2024, there were 2 participants and the first program graduation.



**First
Program
Graduation
in 2024**

COURT PROGRAMS

Mediation

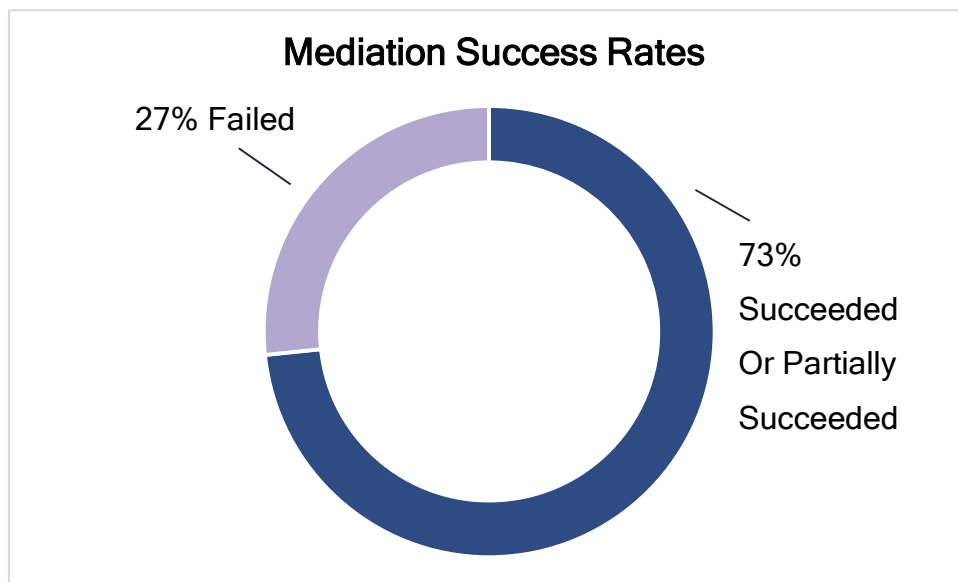
The Ottawa County Common Pleas Court uses trained mediators in a variety of civil and domestic relations cases. These mediators work with the parties to help them develop an agreement on the disputed issues in their case. This process is a time and cost-effective alternative in which parties are encouraged to resolve issues and come to agreements that are beneficial to all the parties. This is done in an informal environment utilizing problem solving and creating alternative solutions that might otherwise not have been generated.

10

**Domestic Cases
Referred**

17

**Civil Cases
Referred**



Free Legal Clinic

The Free Legal Clinic is offered once a month by the Ottawa County Court of Common Pleas provides general legal information and assistance for no cost.



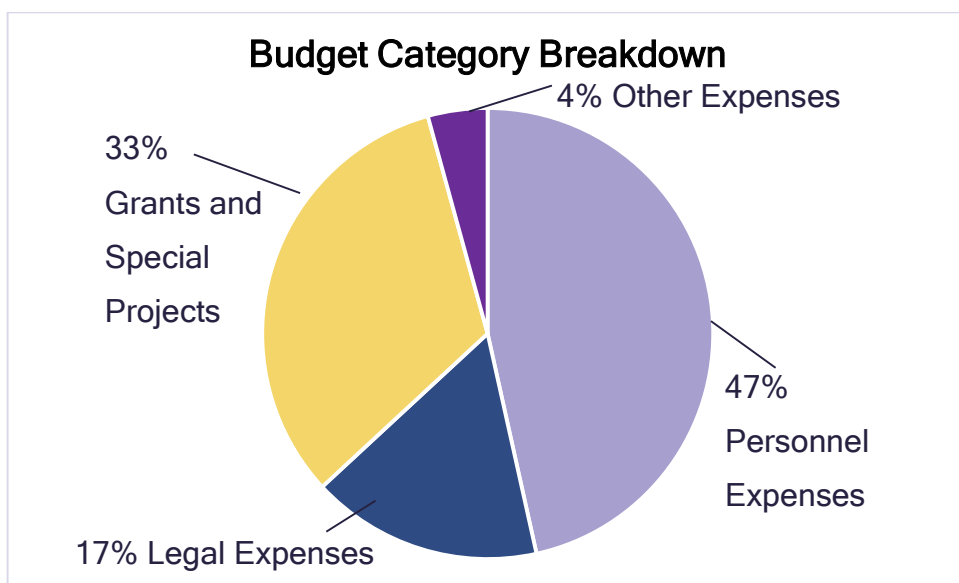
47 Individuals Served

FINANCIAL REPORT

Budget Overview

The Ottawa County Court is funded by the Ottawa County general fund and is self-funded through grants, the Special Project funds, and the Probation Services fund. The Special Project fund and Probation Services fund are generated from filing fees. 1/3 of all court expenses are self-funded.

Cost Breakdown



1/3
of Budget
Self-Funded

Personnel	Legal	Court Self-Funded	Other
Salary	Court Appointed Attorneys	Grants	Software
Health Insurance	Visiting Judges	Special Projects	Supplies
Retirement	Jury Fees	Probation Services	Travel
Worker's Comp	Transcripts	Computer Fund	New Equipment

Grant Information



10 Grants in 2024

The grants received contribute towards public safety, treatment, recovery support, and increased alcohol and drug testing.